

## From the Editor

This issue of *Trends in Amplification* is devoted to the topic of adult aural rehabilitation. The papers contained in this issue were authored by some of the presenters at the State of the Science Conference on Hearing Enhancement held at Gallaudet University, Washington, DC, on September 18 and 19, 2006, and organized by the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Hearing Enhancement. Nearly 2 dozen experts delivered papers and participated in panel discussions devoted to various aspects of adult aural rehabilitation. One hundred fifty participants at the conference included clinicians, researchers, and industry representatives from the fields of hearing aids, cochlear implants, assistive technologies, and rehabilitation therapies. Speakers at the conference focused on identifying the components necessary to adult aural rehabilitation, explored the evidence of the success of current practices, described promising new methods of aural rehabilitation, and identified directions for future research. It is my pleasure to introduce this issue of *Trends in Amplification* in my dual roles as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal and the co-director of the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Hearing Enhancement.

As the first paper in this issue, we have reproduced the keynote address of the conference, given by Arthur Boothroyd. This set the tone and the agenda for the conference, as well as for this issue of the journal. We are also fortunate to be able to share papers from the conference that provide information from sessions devoted to hearing assistive technology, innovative methods of individualized auditory training, group aural rehabilitation, and alternative methods of delivering aural rehabilitation services.

In his paper, Boothroyd defines adult aural rehabilitation and explains how successful rehabilitation practices can contribute to improve communicative function and the quality of life of persons with hearing loss. Hearing assistive technology, effective instruction in the use of sensory devices, perceptual training, and counseling are identified as essential ingredients that supplement provision of sensory

information via hearing aids and/or cochlear implants. Boothroyd also provides a brief overview of the evidence that such aural rehabilitation services provide benefit and identifies the need for research directed toward building the scientific base of aural rehabilitation services.

The papers by Chisolm et al and by Harkins and Tucker represent a session on hearing assistive technology. Chisolm et al provide an overview of past research on the efficacy of FM systems and present data from their recent research demonstrating that personal FM systems can improve communication in noise and for listening to soft sounds by hearing aid users. The paper by Harkins and Tucker presents the results of an Internet survey of individuals with hearing loss regarding the use of assistive listening devices.

The contribution of Sweetow and Henderson-Sabes provides an overview of technologic advances in the delivery of individualized perceptual training programs, summarizes and compares several different computerized aural rehabilitation programs, and presents and evaluates evidence of the benefit of such programs.

Papers by Preminger and by Bally and Bakke represent the session on psychosocial considerations in aural rehabilitation. Preminger provides an overview of the psychosocial effects of hearing loss, reviews research on the efficacy of group aural rehabilitation programs, and provides guidance on research needs in this area. Finally, Bally and Bakke describe the rationale for a peer-mentoring training program at Gallaudet University and the 2-year curriculum that results in a continuing education certificate in peer mentoring. The goal of this program for persons with hearing loss is for graduates of the program to provide peer-mentor services under the supervision of hearing-health professionals.

Although it was possible to share only a small portion of the information presented during the 2-day State of the Science Conference in this issue of the journal, the papers published here provide evidence of a commitment by members of the audiology community to the aural rehabilitation process and of their

efforts to apply new technologies and new methods to the delivery of aural rehabilitation services. Finally, as made clear by all authors, audiologists have the responsibility of carrying out research to provide evidence that specific aural rehabilitation methods or programs optimize benefit from hearing aids and

cochlear implants and improve quality of life for persons with hearing loss.

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*Editor-in-Chief*